

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED Is:

1. A flexible guide for identifying a mounting hole on a surface, said guide comprising:

a first section having a first end and a second end, said first section defining at least one opening;

a second section having a first end and a second end, said respective second ends of said first and second sections connected to one another, said second section defining at least one opening; and

means for releasably connecting said respective first ends of said first and second sections such that said respective openings in said first and second sections are correspondingly aligned with one another.

2. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said guide consists essentially of a one-piece guide.

3. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said guide has a front planar side and a back planar side, said front and back planar sides being finished.

4. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said guide is formed from polymeric material.

5. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said guide is formed from a metal material.

6. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said first and second sections form substantially parallel planes.

7. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said first and second sections are substantially rectangular.

8. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said first and second sections are substantially trapezoidal.

9. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said first and second sections are substantially triangular.

10. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said guide defines an elongate slit, said slit having an open end adjacent said respective first ends of said first and second sections and a closed end adjacent said respective second ends of said first and second sections.

11. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein said respective second ends of said first and second sections define an opening.

12. A flexible guide according to Claim 11, wherein said opening defined by said respective second ends of said first and second sections is substantially circular.

13. A flexible guide according to Claim 11, wherein said opening defined by said respective second ends of said first and second sections is substantially rectangular.

14. A flexible guide according to Claim 1, wherein:
said first end of said second section defines an opening; and

 said connecting means comprises a tab integral with said first end of said first section, said tab aligned to engage said opening defined by said first end of said second section when said respective first ends of said first and second sections are flexed and extended to a position adjacent to one another.

15. A flexible guide according to Claim 14,
wherein:

 said first end of said first section and said tab define a slot positioned adjacent said tab.

16. A flexible guide according to Claim 15, wherein said slot is substantially triangular in shape.

17. A flexible guide according to Claim 15, wherein said slot is substantially trapezoidal in shape.

18. An apparatus for identifying a mounting hole on a wall surface, said apparatus comprising:

a substantially planar flexible guide having a first end and a second end, said first end having portions that are capable of overlapping one another, said guide defining a slit having an open end adjacent said first end of said guide and a closed end adjacent said second end of said guide, said slit capable of receiving and temporarily retaining a mounting device of an article to be hung on the wall surface; and

a tab integral with a portion of said first end of said guide;

wherein another portion of said first end of said guide defines an opening, said opening configured to receive said tab when said portions of said first end of said guide are flexed and extended to a position adjacent to one another.

19. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said guide is formed from polymeric material.

20. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said guide is formed from a metal material.

21. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said guide is substantially rectangular.

22. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said guide defines a first opening and a second opening positioned adjacent to opposing sides of said slit, said first and second openings configured to correspondingly align with one another to define an alignment reference opening when said portions of said first end of said guide are flexed and extended to a position adjacent one another to thereby permit said tab to engage said tab receiving opening.

23. An apparatus according to Claim 22, wherein said first and second openings are positioned substantially parallel to one another.

24. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said second end of said guide defines an opening in communication with said slit, said opening configured to temporarily retain the mounting device of the article to be hung.

25. An apparatus according to Claim 24, wherein said opening defined by said second end of said guide is substantially circular.

26. An apparatus according to Claim 24, wherein said opening defined by said second end of said guide is substantially rectangular.

27. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said guide is a one-piece guide having an external planar side and an internal planar side, said external planar side being finished.

28. A one-piece flexible guide for identifying a mounting hole on a wall surface, said flexible guide comprising:

a substantially rectangular first section having a first end and a second end, said first section defining at least one opening positioned between said first and second ends of said first section;

a substantially rectangular second section having a first end and a second end, said second section defining at least one opening positioned between said first and second ends of said second section, said respective second ends of said first and second sections connected to one another; and

a tab integral with said first end of said first section;

wherein said first end of said second section defines an opening for receiving said tab when said first and second sections are flexed and extended across one another;

wherein said opening in said first section and said opening in said second section are configured to correspondingly align with one another when said tab engages said tab receiving opening;

wherein said first and second sections define a slit having an open end adjacent said respective first ends of said first and second sections and a closed end adjacent said respective second ends of said first and second sections;

wherein said respective second ends of said first and second sections define an opening in communication with said slit.

29. A one-piece flexible guide according to Claim 28, wherein said guide has a front planar side and a back planar side, said front and back planar sides being finished.

30. A one-piece flexible guide according to Claim 28, wherein said guide is formed from polymeric material.

31. A one-piece flexible guide according to Claim 28, wherein said guide is formed from a metal material.

32. A one-piece flexible guide according to Claim 28, wherein said first and second sections form substantially parallel planes.

33. A one-piece flexible guide according to Claim 28, wherein said opening defined by said second end of said guide is substantially circular.

34. A one-piece flexible guide according to Claim 28, wherein said opening defined by said second end of said guide is substantially rectangular.

35. A method for marking a wall surface to identify a mounting hole for an article to be hung, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a flexible guide having a first end, a second end, a first section, and a second section, the first and second sections each defining at least one opening that are capable of corresponding alignment when the first and second sections of the guide are flexed and extended against one another;

supporting an article with the flexible guide; and positioning the guide and article against a desired wall surface to thereby identify a mounting hole for the article.

36. A method according to Claim 35, wherein:

the first and second sections of the guide provided have respective first and second ends, the respective second ends of the first and second sections connected to one another; and

the step of supporting comprises:

connecting at least a portion of the article and at least a portion of the guide such that the guide supports the article; and

releaseably securing the respective first ends of the first and second sections of the flexible guide to one another such that the respective openings in the first and second sections correspondingly align with one another to thereby form an alignment reference opening.

37. A method according to Claim 36, wherein:

the respective first ends of the first and second sections of the flexible guide provided include a means for releasably connecting the first ends; and

the step of releasably securing comprises flexing the first and second sections of the guide against one another so that the connecting means connects the respective first ends of the guide.

38. A method according to Claim 35, wherein the step of positioning the guide comprises the steps of:

arranging the flexible guide and article against the desired wall surface such that the guide supports the article at a desired height; and

marking the wall with visible indicia by extending an instrument through the correspondingly aligned openings in the first and second sections to thereby identify an alignment reference point for identifying the mounting hole.

39. A method according to Claim 35, wherein:

the second end of the guide provided defines an opening spaced apart from the respective openings each defined by the first and second sections; and

the step of positioning further comprises the steps of:

removing the article from the supporting flexible guide;

aligning the guide on the wall such that the respective openings defined by the first and second sections are substantially parallel to the alignment reference point on the wall; and

marking the wall with visible indicia to thereby identify the mounting hole.

40. A method according to Claim 39, wherein the step of marking comprises extending an instrument through the opening defined by the second end of the guide.

41. A method according to Claim 39, wherein the step of marking comprises extending an instrument against the wall at an edge of the guide and parallel to the opening defined by the second end of the guide.

42. A method according to Claim 35, further comprising the steps of:

securing a nail into the mounting hole; and

mounting the article on the wall surface.

all performed after steps of positioning the guide
and article against the desired wall surface.